

**County Land Acquisition Program Summary for Palm Beach County  
June 30, 2004**

**Name of program:** Environmentally Sensitive Lands (ESL) Program (1991-1999) and Land Acquisition Program for Conservation Purposes (1999 to present).

**Purpose of program:** The ESL program was for the acquisition of properties that contained high quality native ecosystems. The sites contained rare, threatened, or endangered native habitats, flora and/or fauna. These properties represented some of the best examples of the remaining native ecosystems in the County. The Land Acquisition Program for Conservation Purposes was established to purchase additional ESL-type properties and lands for greenways, water resources, open space, and agriculture.

**How program was started:** County inventory of remaining environmentally sensitive lands. Results of that study led to County sponsored bond referendums for land preservation.

**How project lands are identified:** For the ESL Program, lands were identified by a scientific study commissioned by the Board of County Commissioners in 1987. A citizen advisory committee further refined the acquisition list of lands down to a priority list of lands. For the Land Acquisition Program for Conservation Purposes, staff from the County's Department of Environmental Resources Management (ERM) developed a list of potential acquisitions. This list was further refined by a citizen advisory committee (Conservation Lands Acquisition Selection Committee [CLASC]).

**How project lands are selected:** All targeted lands have been listed by CLASC. CLASC and ERM's staff attempt to acquire those lands that have the best deals, the best habitats and resources, and are larger in size than other properties being considered. Sellers that are willing to make the best deals will have their deals addressed first.

**Indications of popular support for program:** Bond Referendums in March of 1991 and of 1999. These bond programs had unanimous support from the Board of County Commissioners. Support from the public was demonstrated by approval ratings greater than 67% of the voters that voted. The County currently has 46 designated site stewards. Over the past fiscal year, volunteers have given more than 3760 hours of volunteer time in the natural areas.

**Year started:** 1991

**Funding source:** General Revenue Bonds

**Total funds available:** \$100,000,000 in 1991 and \$150,000,000 in 1999.

**Funds expended to date:** For acquisition only—County contribution \$139,750,913

**Acquisition and/or management partners to date:**

State of Florida –CARL Program

FCT Program

Regional Agency–SFWMD

Municipalities–Boynton Beach

Boca Raton

**Funds/in kind services provided by partners to date:** \$60,811,865

**Number of acres acquired:** 25,609 (recently sold 2,121 acres to the State)

**Number of acres on acquisition list:** 7,678

**Number of projects acquired:** 28

**Number of projects on acquisition list:** 22

**Examples of specific resources protected by the program:** Threatened and Endangered Species and their habitat; rare habitats (e.g., scrub habitat); headwaters of the Loxahatchee River

**How the program contributes to the restoration or protection of south Florida's ecosystems:** Preserves remnant native habitats of South Florida in perpetuity.

**Program contact information:**

David K. Gillings, Environmental Program Supervisor

561-233-2477

3323 Belvedere Road, Bldg. 502

West Palm Beach, FL 33406

dgilling@co.palm-beach.fl.us